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THE LAST DROP.

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THE AMATEUR STAGE.

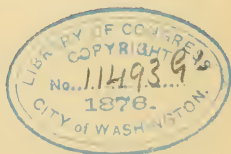
THE LAST DROP.

A TEMPERANCE DRAMA,

IN ONE ACT,

BY

JOHN H. DELAFIELD.



NEW YORK:

HAPPY HOURS COMPANY,

No. 1 CHAMBERS STREET.

1878

THE LAST DROP.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GEORGE COMSTOCK, *A Mechanic and Teetotaler.*
JOHN WALSH, *A Mechanic and Inebriate.*
CATCH'EM, *A Bartender.*
DOGNOSE, *An old Drunkard, in the last stage.*
ABRAHAM SEE, *A Help, also an Amateur Thespian.*
MR. RAINFALL, *A Sheriff's Officer.*
POLICEMAN, *A Clubbist.*
MRS. WATERY LOTT, *A Mother-in-Law.*
MRS. JANE COMSTOCK, *A Model Wife.*
MRS. JANE WALSH, *A Drunkard's Wife.*

COSTUMES.—MODERN.

PROPERTIES.

SCENE I.—Round table with table cloth on it, c.; supper laid for three, complete. Water bottle and tumblers on table. Chairs. Small table r. Cradle with Baby and clothes in it, r.c. Chair between table and cradle. Book, pen, ink and roll of paper on table r. Basket of provisions. Rolling pin. Large bell. Bundle of wood. Plate to break.

SCENE II.—Painted sign "The Golden Eagle." Policeman's club. Bartender's apron. Money. Labels of "Wines," "Liquors," "Cigars," "Lager Bier," "Philadelphia Ale," painted on the store front. A glass of whisky.

SCENE III.—Old table. Four old chairs. A broken arm chair l.c. Fire burning u.e.r. Kettle of hot water. Teapot with tea made in it. Four cups and saucers. Four spoons. Four knives and forks. Four plates. Two dishes. Table cloth. Dram bottle. Water bottle and tumbler. Basket of provisions, containing meat, ham and butter, all in separate papers.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1876, by HAPPY HOURS COMPANY,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

* * * There is no charge for the performance of this play.

THE LAST DROP.

SCENE I.—MR. COMSTOCK'S House (*the Home of Temperance*). Window in flat (*to open*) R.C. Door in flat L.C. Door U.E.R. Small table R. Cradle with Baby and clothes in it R.C. Chair between table and cradle. Book, pen, ink, and roll of paper on table. Supper table set for three C.

ABRAHAM SEE discovered seated watching the baby and rocking the cradle, he is also endeavoring to read and write at a table at the same time.

Abe. (*Sings.*) "Rock-a-by baby, mother is near!" (*Speaks.*) Sweet little scorpion, don't you look queer. (*Sings.*) "Rock-a-by baby, mother is here." (*Baby cries, he looks round.*) No, she isn't, no such luck. (*Rockes again violently.*) Go to sleep, you little insect, and let me indulge in my literary labor of love—that of reading and writing at the same time. Killing two stones with one bird; no, hitting two birds on the head with one stone, that's it. (*Baby leaves off crying.*) That's better, the insect sleeps once more and "Richard's himself again." Let me see, where was I? (*Looks over book.*) Let me see, see, see! (*Scratches his head.*) I shall never get out of that sea. Another author drowned! Died from want of idea on the brain. (*Suddenly.*) Ah! I have it, "The Ghost of my Murdered Mother-in-law." That shall be the title for my new drama. I'll represent a mother-in-law upon the stage and murder her. What a brilliant idea! glorious! The title itself is sufficient to (*acts*) "harrow up the soul, freeze the young blood and make one's two eyes start from their spears like quills." (*Baby cries, ABE hits it over the head with a roll of paper.*) Shut up, you little imp, and don't cry. I wasn't speaking of your eyes, but mine. (*Acts.*) "Round, round as the globes, you ethereal heavens." (*MRS. WATERY LOTT calls from T.E.R., "Aby!" Starts, strikes a position.*) That's me! (*Calls off R.*)

Y-e-e-e-s. (*To audience.*) That's my master's mother-in-law. (*Pulls a face.*) She's a beauty, boiled vinegar! That's a mother-in-law, as has always got her weather eye open and when that gorgon looks angry this child (*meaning himself*) has got to look out for squalls! (*Mrs. W. L. calls off, "Aby!"*) C-o-m-ing! (*Shuts the book and throws it away.*) There! "The Ghost of my Murdered Mother-in-Law" may rest in peace for this day. (*Comes down.*) Now, my master is a factory hand, works hard, earns a pile o' money, and is a decent sort of a fellow, but when he married into the family of the Watery Lotts, he not only partook of a wife belonging to that unsavory beverage, but he had also to betake unto himself the crocodile of a mother-in-law of that same pump water stream of Watery Lotts. (*Mrs. W. L. calls again, "Aby!"* *Imitates her voice.*) Coming! (*Baby cries—ABE hits it.*) Shut up! what with the baby and its mummy of an old grandmother, this (*meaning himself*) promising child of genius has a queer and lively time of it.

Mrs. W. L. (*Without U.E.R.*) Abe, I want you to fetch the wood, and be quick.

Abe. (*Acts.*) Right, most glorious crocodile. (*Acts.*) Fetch the wood, bring the sticks, or, if you tarry your head I'll lick.

Enter Mrs. WATERY LOTT, U.E.R.

Mrs. W. L. (*From behind, hits him over the head with a rolling-pin.*) Fetch the wood!

Abe. (*L.*) O-h! (*Hand to his head.*) I've got it. (*Aside.*) Wood upon my wooden head. (*Aloud to her.*) "Avaunt! and quit my sight, thy bones are marrowless—there is no speculation in those eyes."

Mrs. W. L. (*R., hits him again.*) But there's plenty of reality, you idiot.

Abe. (*Acts.*) Give me a dozen wives. (*Aside quickly.*) But no mother-in-law. (*Aloud.*) "Bind up my wounds."

Mrs. W. L. (*Hits him again.*) I'll wound you!

Abe. (*Acts.*) "Another and another yet! I'll have no more."

Mrs. W. L. Get out, idiot. (*Follows him up stage.*)

Abe. (*Folds his arms and scowls.*) Get out, idiot! Ha, ha! (*Strikes an attitude.*) "What's in a name? A rose by any other—" (*Breaks off suddenly and sings and dances to the tune of*) "Dere's some one in de house wid Dinah, dere's somebody in de house, I know."

Mrs. W. L. Get out of the house, and leave Dinah alone. Do you know me, fellow?

Abe. Well! you are my missus' mother and master's mother-in-law! What's home without a mother-in-law. It may be all very well (*smirks at her*) without one, but a mother-in-law makes it lively!

(*She chases him round the stage, ordering him to fetch the wood, she drives him out at door in flat L.C.; he singing, "Buffalo gals, will you come out to night, &c."*)

Mrs. W. L. (Looking after him.) A good-for-nothing lout. This all comes of reading, stuffing his head with the contents of cheap novels and insulting the head of the family ; *(with dignity)* the mother-in-law of the Comstock household, the head of the family of the Watery Lotts.

Enter Mrs. JANE COMSTOCK, D.F., with basket of provisions.

Mrs. C. (L.) Oh, mother, you here? *(Puts down basket.)* I'm so glad, for I've good news—George will be home to dinner directly, to-morrow he commences fresh duties. He has been promoted and is now the foreman of the factory.

Mrs. W. L. (R., with a self-satisfied air.) A-h! I take some credit to myself for that, my dear. All my children have married well, for haven't I inculcated the golden grains of sobriety in all their minds? And what between the wife and the wife's preceptor (your husband's mother-in-law), no wonder that he has been led into the channels of discretion, temperance and sobriety! The Watery Lotts and temperance habits always go together.

George. (Without, door L.F.) Jane! Jane!

Mrs. C. Ah, here he is!

Enter Mr. GEORGE COMSTOCK door L.F. His wife welcomes him. He takes off his coat, &c., which his wife places at back of stage.

George. (C.) Good news, wife! Why do you smile and seem so radiant? Surely you must have heard of my promotion. Have you?

Mrs. C. (Shakes hands with him.) I have, George, just now at the grocer's, and was so pleased, that I hurried away to get home before you. Now sit down, *(She places a chair for him at the head of c. table)* for it's a cold dinner to-day—All was prepared before I went to the store!

(They sit at table which has been laid out for dinner, water-bottle on table.)

George. (Seated at head of table, c., helps himself to water, drinks.) Ah! That's invigorating after a hard morning's work. We have been married over twelve months, dear wife, and to-morrow I shall commence my foremanship with over five hundred dollars savings in the bank. When we married, Jane, I was poor, you exacted a promise that I would abstain from the use of all stimulating drinks.

Mrs. C. (L.) I did, George, and right well have you kept your word.

(Jumps up, kisses him.)

Mrs. W. L. (R.) Good!

(Sighs.)

George. Yes, I have kept my word, although, I must confess, I found it somewhat hard at first ; but I persevered, wife, and eventually succeeded ; have worked hard, both early and late ; have saved money, and thanks to this, *(holding up a tumbler of water)* to the invigorating qualities of pure wholesome water, which neither enervates nor debases, I stand now in the full confidence of my employer, and to-

morrow regularly commence my duties as foreman over the largest factory in this district.

Mrs. C. (*Who has helped all to meat, pickles, &c., throughout the foregoing.*) I congratulate you, George, for you have deserved success. With true self-denial, you have kept your word to abstain from drinking, nor do I believe since you placed this wedding-ring upon my finger, and I exacted that promise from you as the price of my consent, you have ever tasted of anything stronger than the natural drinks of mankind.

George. Jane, you're an angel!

Mrs. W. L. Ah, my children, (*sighs*) you see what it is to have a mother-in-law! A good wife is well enough in her way, but without a mother's elevating precepts to her daughter previous to marriage, and the doctrines of good inculcated in the mind of the husband by his mother-in-law *after*, (*with energy*) that husband never could have embraced or worshipped his angel!

George. (*Laughs heartily.*) Well said, mother-in-law. Is she not right, wife—say?

Mrs. C. Mother's right in the value of her precepts, but somewhat wrong in another way. So are you, George. I am *no* angel, but merely a true woman faithful to her trust. My work throughout has merely been a labor of love, for I have simply performed my duty. A little hole in a ship sinks it. "A little drop" has been many a man and woman's ruin. Every drunkard begins with a "*Single glass.*" Twelve months back you *promised* faithfully (for I would not let you swear) that when we married you had partaken of your 'Last Drop,' and I (*reverently*) thank God that you have kept your word!

(*Child cries.*)

George. Look to the baby, wife.

(*JANE goes to the cradle and rocks it, baby stops crying, GEORGE sits L. of cradle.*)

George. Bless its little rosy cheeks. (*Mrs. W. L. clears the table, leaving ABE's dinner on table.*) You see wife, I have tried both ways. When I drank hard long before our marriage I became enervated. Since my fulfilled promise to abstain, I have become invigorated. I drink no spirits, and am in *good* spirits. I never touch ale, therefore am both hale and hearty. I never poison my system in the form of drinks, nor do I use antidotes in the form of drugs. I have four reasons for remaining so:

First—My health is stronger,
Second—My head is clearer,
Third—My heart is lighter, and
Fourth—My purse is heavier!

Which renders wife, home, mother-in-law and all around us happier!

(*Factory bell rings, all jump up.*)

Mrs. C. There's the factory bell. That's the first one, George.

I'll have some nice hot cakes and everything comfortable when you come home to supper. Away you go! *(She brings his coat.)*

Abe. *(Who has previously entered door L.F., stands within the doorway—acts.)* “Stand not upon the order of going but go at once.” *(They all laugh.)* Whew! it's warm, master, and I'm thirsty. Mrs. Watery Lott, *(to Mrs. W. L., who is L.)* this benighted traveller is parched. A glass of water, you old beldame, if you love me!

(Mrs. C. helps her husband on with his coat R.C.)

Mrs. W. L. Love you, you young good-for-nothing, if you don't obey and leave off that trashy play acting, I'll thrash you!

Abe. *(c.)* The woman who lays her hand upon this innocence and virtue, ah! she dies!

(He strikes an attitude, throwing wood down L.C., which goes on Mrs. W. L.'s toes.)

Mrs. W. L. *(L.)* O-h! my corn! You imp, you've killed me!

Abe. “Dead, for a ducat, dead!” Ha! ha! *(Thrusts.)* I triumph! *(Crows. Mrs. W. L. runs after him—GEORGE interposes.)*

George. Abe, unless you leave off indulging in this display of nonsense, you will have to find another master. Eat your dinner!

Abe. *(Salutams, aside.)* Kind slave, I obey. *(Takes plate from table, sits in L. corner, eats.)* I'll become a killer, for that lot is a killerer!

George. Don't mind him, mother-in-law, I'll correct him.

Mrs. W. L. *(Going off, U.E.R.)* But my corn, oh, the good-for-nothing. *(Hobbles off U.E.R.)* My corn! my corn!

Abe. Yes, pop corn!

(Sings.)

“Up and down the city road,

In and out the Eagle,

That's the way the money goes,

(Makes the sound of “Pop!” with his finger and his mouth.)

Pop! goes the weasel!

(Eats and chokes, GEORGE hits him in the back.) “Tyrant! would you take my life?” Take anything but that. *(Acts, throws down plate, &c.)* “I fly to save myself, or perish in the attempt!”

(Exits door L.F., with a melo-dramatic start. Factory bell rings.)

Abe. *(Pops his head in at the window in flat R.C., acts.)* “Ring the alarm-bell,” “awake these snorting sleepers in their beds.”

(GEORGE throws his cap at him, ABE disappears, closing window.)

Mrs. C. There's the second bell, George. You've five minutes only to get back to the factory.

George. I'm off. *(Going c., comes back.)* Oh, Jane, John Walsh has not been to work to-day; the old complaint, wife, drink. If to-morrow he is absent without good cause, my instructins are, on the commencement of my new duties, to discharge him on the instant.

Mrs. C. *(L.C.)* Poor Mrs. Walsh, what will become of her?

George. (c.) Both Mr. and Mrs. Walsh are good hearted souls, but the effect of that cursed passion of his for drink is breaking up their home. I wish I could reclaim him, both would then be made happy. Jane, you shall go and see Mrs. Walsh, ask her to supper. I'll talk seriously to John and try to effect his cure.

Mrs. C. I will, George! Now hurry off. I wish poor John would take his "Last Drop" as you have done.

George. Good bye, wife, for the present. *(Kisses her.)*

Abe. (Opens window in flat, looks in, sings.) "Oh, kiss me! kiss me! pretty mother."

(GEORGE makes for him, he closes the window and disappears.)

GEORGE exits door L.F. Mrs. COMSTOCK laughs.

Close in quickly.

SCENE II.—*A Front Street. MR. CATCH'EM'S Liquor Store. Door in flat c. Sign "The Golden Eagle" hanging over door. Various labels, consisting of "Wines," "Liquors," "Cigars," "Lager Bier," "Philadelphia Ale," &c., painted on flat. Lights half down.*

Catch'em. (Appearing at door.) Nearly two o'clock. *(Yawns.)* Trade's bad to-night, it makes a bartender feel sleepy. Plenty of customers inside, but no money. *(Shakes his head.)* But no hanging up; that game's played out. An honest bartender can't make any stamps, if he's always hanging everybody up. *(Yawns.)* Where's Jack Walsh to-night? First time he's missed my bar for more than two years. *(Looks off L.)* Here's the "cop." *(POLICEMAN enters L.)* All right, officer. *(Pantomimes and exits into store.)*

Police. (Looks round cautiously.) No sergeant about. It's rather cold; a tumbler of Catch'em's Rye whisky will be O.K.

Re-enter CATCH'EM with whisky, which he keeps behind him. POLICEMAN looks about, then slyly and quickly drinks it. JOHN WALSH speaks without L.

Catch'em. (R.C.) At last! Jack Walsh is to be sold out to-morrow, officer. An honest bartender may as well get his last stamps as the sheriff. Jack's a generous fellow, treats all hands when he's flush. Be on the look out, Policeman, in case you are wanted, for Jack gets ugly at times.

Policeman. (c.) Ah! Too much rum is bad for working men! Bartenders must be protected, Mr. Catch'em, and the police force must be respected also, Mr. Catch'em. *(Hits CATCH'EM over the arm with his club, at which he cries out.)* Excuse me, sir, I'm sure I thought I had a case. *(JOHN sings without L.)* But here he comes. I'll look out, sir. *(POLICEMAN exits R. CATCH'EM goes in store.)*

John Walsh. (Sings without L.)—

“Since then good liquor was sent for our uses,
‘To gladden our hearts while we shun its abuses;”

Enter JOHN WALSH, L., drunk.

“May each teetotalist freeze, until ice
 He’s a lump of,
For the man that drinks water, I’d have
 Made a pump of.
 ‘Tol-de-dol, &c.”

(Speaks, c.) I wonder if Catch’em, the bartender, will hang me up. I’ve no money left, and I’ve spent “lashens” at his bar. Well,—hic—I can but try. A-h! whisky’s good for my complaint. Whisky! Why, whisky the god of war brightens the intellect, and ought to be introduced at our public schools! *(Sings.)*

“He drank slops and water, took tea to satiety,
Which made his wife curse the teetotal society.

 ‘Tol-de-dol, &c.

Catch’em. (Appears at door in flut.) Ah, my dear friend Jack Walsh! Honest Injun!

(Going to shake JOHN by the hand, who tries to see and grasp it, makes a dive, misses it, nearly knocking CATCH’EM down.)

JOHN leans his full weight upon him.

John. (L.C.) Steady, steady! Here, somebody hold me up, or I shall knock down this lump-post! *(Reels against CATCH’EM afresh.)*

Catch’em. (R.C.) Ha, ha, ha! Lump-post? That’s a good ‘un. But come in, friend Jack, you’re always welcome, proud to see old friends, and a “ball” will do you good!

John. Good? Ha, ha! good! Yes, it will! I’ll drink to forget home! Forget poverty, a sick wife, child, myself, life, misery, death! Ha, ha, ha! Whisky! *(With a sudden change of manner.)* Catch’em, I’m to be sold out to-morrow. Discharged, too! Ha, ha! think of that! ‘There’s sport!

(Reels and drags CATCH’EM up to the store. CATCH’EM pats JOHN encouragingly on the head.)

Catch’em. Come, Jack, one or two good “stiff ‘uns” taken straight will do you good. *(Exeunt into store.)*

Enter POLICEMAN, R.

Police. Yes, Mr. John Walsh, you don’t want much more drink to lay you straight, and make you a “stiff ‘un,” as you call it, for good! *(Rubs his hands gleefully.)* I shall have a customer to-night. I’ll wait about and land him. *(Exit R.)*

Enter MRS. JOHN WALSH L., she is pale and woe-begone, also poorly clad. She appears dejected.

Mrs. Walsh. For hours have I been waiting to try and find my

husband, yet of no avail. Oh, this cursed passion for strong drink! What demon is it that urges men to destroy their constitutions, desolate their homes, ruin their wives and families, never seeming to rest or be happy until they reach the police station and the jail? In a few hours the sheriff's execution and my husband's discharge from the factory both await us! George and his wife have been with me during the past night, and with all kindness in their hearts, delicately they made me acquainted with the worst! (*Loud laughter, then quarrelling within the store behind the flats.*) Oh, heavens! (*Looks hurriedly through door into the store, starts back.*) I thought so! My husband is there, and quarrelling! I cannot enter into the presence of those rough men. (*As with a sudden thought.*) I will go back to George at this late hour, he will not mind being disturbed, if only he could be the means of helping a broken hearted wife and restoring a husband to her loving arms. (*Exit, hurriedly, L.*)

(*Fresh tumult within store behind flats.* JOHN is ejected by

CATCH'EM, he reels and falls c.

Catch'em. (*Calls off R.*) Here, officer!

Re-enter POLICEMAN, R.

Police. (R.C.) What is it, sir?

Catch'em. (L.C.) Why, this drunken vagabond, after forcing his way into my liquor store and ordering the best in the house for everybody, refuses to pay, and says he has no money. Honest men are not to be imposed upon by drunken loafers! Ours is a respectable hotel, officer. Here! (*Quietly gives POLICEMAN money.*) You know!

Police. Right, Mr. Catch'em, I know you, sir. You're an honest man, sir. I'll protect you. (*Kicks JOHN.*) Get up!

Catch'em. (*Nods his head with approval.*) I see I can safely leave him with you. Good night, officer! (*Exit into store.*)

Police. I'll nurse him, sir. I'll treat him as I would a baby. (*Clubs him. WALSH halloes out.*) Don't make that infernal row. Do you think we've nothing better to do than to be dragging a lot of scallywags, without money, before the judge on charges of drunkenness? (*Kicks him.*) What right have you to get drunk and no money? (*Clubs him—WALSH groans piteously. The POLICEMAN empties his pockets, turning them inside out.*) I knew it, not a cent. (*Handles him roughly, drags him to his feet.*) Stand up! If you don't walk quietly, I'll club you black and blue, and in the morning swear that you were drunk and disorderly!

John. (*Almost helpless.*) O-h! You've clubbed me black and blue already! (*Groans.*)

Police. (*Dragging him off R.*) Come along, d'ye hear?

(*WALSH by a desperate effort throws him off and stands erect, burning with rage—Tableau.*)

Police. (*Surprised.*) Why, I thought you were drunk?

John. (c.) *I was!* But your clubbing has somewhat sobered me, and I am thankful for it! I swear never to touch another drop of liquid fire again, as long as ever I live! Oh! my wife, my child, to this (*satirically to POLICEMAN*) good *angel* of the public peace, to this cruel devil of the police force, the existing police *curse* to humanity, you owe, this night, a husband and a father's preservation from disgrace, from ruin, from jail! Thank God! thank God!

(*Weeps silently.*)

Police. (*Amazed.*) Here, stop that, and come with me. Crying will not help you any, for a drunkard's word with never be taken. We don't want any exhibition of Plymouth Rock snivelling in the public streets and we don't intend to have it.

(*Seizes WALSH, who resists and calls for help. They struggle.*)

GEORGE and MRS. WALSH enter L. GEORGE strikes POLICEMAN to the ground R. GEORGE and JOHN C. MRS. WALSH L. CATCH'EM appears at door in flat. *Tableau.*

George. We don't want any of your public paid ruffianism "exhibited in the public streets, and we don't intend to have it!" I have not tasted one drop of cursed liquor for more than twelve months and *my word will be taken.* I—saw—you—club—that—man, after which "go through him" as the saying is, while he was lying senseless upon the ground. I will appear and make a charge against you to-morrow before the judge, unless you allow me quietly to take him away to his home, for he has promised to lead an amended life, and he will be yet a blessing instead of a curse to his wife and family! (*Warningly to JOHN.*) But not another drop of strong drink, John.

John. (*Sobered, but dazed.*) N-o! I—I—I've taken (*sighing with a sense of relief*) "The Last Drop," "The Last Drop!" (*Music.*)

(GEORGE and MRS. WALSH lead JOHN off L. CATCH'EM enters the store and closes door. POLICEMAN slinks off R. displaying anger,

SCENE III.—JOHN WALSH'S Home (*the Abode of Drunkenness*). A Rude Garret. Door in flat L. Old table c. Four old chairs. One broken armchair, L. Small fire burning in grate U.E.R.

MRS. WALSH discovered preparing breakfast, laying the cloth, cups and saucers, plates, knives, &c. JOHN sleeping in a chair R.

Mrs. Walsh. (c., *looks at her husband.*) Yes, dear husband, you have promised to reform, and I believe you are now sincere; sleep on, sleep out this drunken stupor, a delirium which too often reduces a man to the level of the brute. (*Takes up the teapot.*) Now to put the tea in the pot. (*Does so. Goes to the fire.*) Now for the boiling water. (*Fills the pot, burns her hand, drops it quickly and blows her hands.*) That was hot! (*Quickly runs with the pot to the table, places it down.*) Now, when Comstock's lad comes with the bread, the ham

and the butter, and George and his wife arrive before he starts for his morning's work, we will all have a pleasant breakfast together. Only to them are we indebted for this kindness, they have furnished us with all these necessaries. Only bare shelves in an empty cupboard have supplied the provisions for my family during the past few days. Pawn, pawn, pawn! drink, drink, drink! (*Rouses herself.*) But I'll not repine, matters are going to mend, my sick child will become well, my once loving husband sober and industrious, when I shall again witness, what I did with pride and pleasure, during the first years of our married life, a loving, happy and contented household!

(*Knock at the door L.F., DOGNOSE opens it, and appears drunk.*)

Dognose. Can I come in? (*Enters and closes door after him.*) Don't disturb yourself, Mrs. Walsh, I never do. Don't stand upon ceremony. That's not my custom. (*Sits at table. Puts his hand on the teapot—burns his fingers.*) Whew! what in thunder's this? (*Shakes his fingers to cool them. Bends his head and smells.*) Tea! Stuff! Why people will persist in destroying the coatings of their stomachs with these infernal hot drinks, I don't know and can't tell!

(*Takes dram bottle out of his pocket and sits in the old arm-chair*

L.C.

Mrs. Walsh. (*Sits dejectedly in chair at table. Aside.*) The shadow of evil again here to darken our threshold on the promised dawn of brightness. (*Looks round to R.*) My husband sleeps. If I could but manage to get this tempter Dognose out of the house before he awakes or the Comstock's arrive. (*Rises.*) I'll try!

Dognose. (*Seated L.*) What are you talking to yourself about, Mrs. Walsh? Be plain and above board. That's my maxim. Speak out (*thumps the table*) like a man, or you'll make me chicken hearted and feel like a woman. Here, drink! (*Without rising from his chair he holds out the dram bottle to her.*) Drink hearty and drown your sorrow!

(*DOGNOSE drinks.*)

Mrs. Walsh. (*Starts up C.*) Man, (*pause—DOGNOSE, bleared, looks up*) or rather brute, leave this place, and at once. (*Pointing to door in flat.*) Your evil ways and worse counsels have brought ruin upon my husband and all belonging to us. The whiskey fiend, drink, that dry rot to man's prosperity, his present joys and future hopes, has worked sufficient misery here, and now that my husband has promised to reform leave this place instantly. Do not awaken him, do not let him catch a glimpse of you, the author of all this ruin, or dread the just fury of an injured and a broken-hearted wife!

(*She falls into chair by the table and weeps.*)

Dognose. (*Maudlingly looks over at her.*) A storm in a tea-cup! Humph! Here's your good health, marm! (*Drinks—sings.*) "For good wine inspires us, it inflames and devours us." Ha, ha, ha! What a happy fellow Walsh must be to have such an angel for a wife. Now, when a man's in a passion he tears his hair, but when a woman's angry she tears her husband's, so the poor wretch gets it both ways. Your health again, marm!

(*Drinks. Gets up, staggers, crosses over to R. and wakes JOHN, brings him down stage R.C., offers him the dram bottle; JOHN maudlingly takes it, is about to drink when MRS. WALSH looks up from table, sees the action, rushes down, protects her husband. Tableau.*)

Mrs. Walsh. (C.) No, no, husband, your promise, not your oath. Remember your word, "no strong drinks," "I have taken 'The Last Drop,' 'The Last Drop!'" Come, come! (*She gets the bottle; he gradually and gently relinquishing his hold.*) Thank heaven! The whisky fiend is brought to bay. Truth and good counsel at last prevail!

(*Puts the bottle down on table, then places her husband's neck-tie in better trim. DOGNOSE snatches up the bottle.*)

Dognose. (L., aside.) Won't drink? Then I will. (*Drinks.*) What's life without pleasure? (*Shuffles in a maudlin manner to L. chair.*) A short life and a merry one, that's my motto! (*Sings aloud in a drunken manner.*) "Oh, I wouldn't live for ever, I wouldn't if I could. But I needn't fret about it, for I couldn't if I would!"

(*Falls helplessly asleep in chair.*)

Enter Mr. and Mrs. COMSTOCK door L.F., followed by ABRAHAM SEE with a basket of provisions.

George. Here we are as promised. We've just half an hour for breakfast before the factory bell goes. (*Touches the tea-pot on the table.*) The tea's made, I see. That's all right. (*To ABE.*) Now, then, A-B-C, out with the provender, and let us feed.

Abe. (*Quickly places the eatables on the table—acts.*) "Feed the hungry lions in their den." Ha, ha, ha! Wolves, wolves, wolves! (*GEORGE hits him on the head—ABE springs into the L. corner; imitates an old man.*) "For five-and-twenty years I've never tasted food."

(*During this MRS. COMSTOCK and MRS. WALSH have prepared the table, &c.*)

Mrs. C. Let us eat hearty and rest thankful. Now then, breakfast.

Abe. (L., sees DOGNOSE asleep in the chair L.C., starts.) Ha! ha! Give him his gruel and let him go to bed!

George. (R.C., sees DOGNOSE, to MRS. WALSH.) That man here? How is that?

Mrs. Walsh. (L.C.) He forced his way in; would have forced my husband to drink with him, but he remembered his promise, as he told us he would, that he'd partaken of his "Last Drop."

George. I am glad to hear it. (*To JOHN.*) Cheer up, old fellow, we'll save you yet.

John. (*Heartily shakes GEORGE by the hand.*) I hope so, George, I pray so.

George. (*Looking over to DOGNOSE in chair L.C.*) What a sight for humanity. At an early hour in the morning, when the lark is singing in the heavens, here's a man in his cups and asleep, drunk, dead drunk!

Abe. (*L., points below and sings.*) "Down among the dead men, down, down, down."

Mrs. C. (*c., laughs.*) You'd better sit down, Aby, and eat your breakfast, (*All laugh and sit.*)

Enter MR. RAINFALL and a Sheriff's officer, door L.F.—all rise.

George. What's all this?

Mr. Rainfall. (*At door.*) A distraint for rent! The landlord will wait no longer, nor will he encourage drunken tenants. (*To his man.*) Out with the goods into the street.

George. Stop! John Walsh has promised to reform, and he is a man of his word. Is not that so, John?

John. (*Rises.*) Yes, George, it is. I will conquer all difficulties and temptations at starting, and be successful in the end.

George. Mind you do, then. (*Crosses over to DOGNOSE L.C., and takes the dram bottle from his hand, goes back to JOHN.*) John, (*JOHN turns*) have another drink? (*Holds dram bottle—JOHN turns away.*) From this, then? (*Takes the water bottle from c. table.*) The water bottle!

(*Pours out a tumbler of water—JOHN drinks heartily; all pleased.*)

George. (*To MR. R.*) Mr. Rainfall, I'll see you paid. John Walsh is on the right road now, he means what he says and together we'll go to work in the factory this very morning.

Mr. R. All right, sir. I can trust you, you're a man of your word; for you're a sober man and don't fool away your earnings upon drink. (*To man.*) Come along.

(*They exeunt door in flat. Factory bell rings without.*)

John. (*Cheerfully.*) There goes the first bell, George.

Mrs. Walsh. (*Crosses to him, R.C.*) That's right husband, waken up.

Abe. (*Looks at JOHN.*) The dormouse sleeps on the old man's knee!

George. Don't make a fool of yourself, A-B-C.

Mrs. C. Mr. Walsh, you're on the straight track at last.

John. And hope to continue so! And with kind words and counsel from our dear friends present, aided by my own power of will, trust never again to get out of the grooves of sobriety.

George. That's right, stick to your text, John, and maybe years after, when the laws of temperance shall have made us all prosperous and happy, when the present is forgotten, we may remember the loving words only and the happy feelings of the present hour; never forgetting that poor folks have hearts the same as the rich ones; that, with a "cup of crystal water" we must tender a little kindness and consistent counsel. For was it not over a like refreshing draught (*holds up a glass of water*) that your vow to abandon all stimulants was recorded—that of this poison (*holds up the dram bottle*) you had seen the last, that you had partaken of "The Last Drop."

Disposition of the Characters.

DOGNOSE *in chair*
at back.

MRS. C.
L. C.

GEORGE.
C.

MRS. WALSH.
B. C.

ABE SEF.
L.

JOHN.
E.

CURTAIN.

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